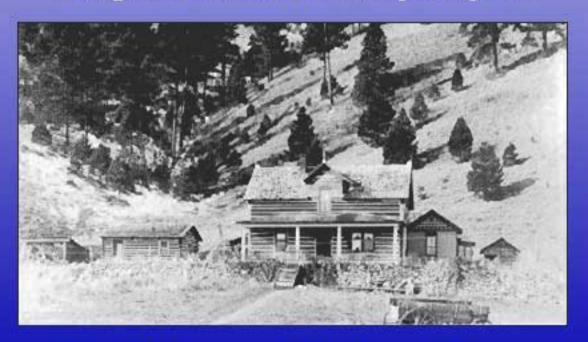
Let's Look At a Century of Forest Management...

Allow me to show you a series of remarkable photos that dramatically capture a century of forestry management. I think you'll agree that these photos paint a vivid picture.

The first photo was taken in 1871. It shows a picture of a cabin in what is now the Bitterroot National Forest in Montana. Note the evergreen trees and the open space.



1871 Bitterroot National Forest

The next photo was taken in 1980. Same cabin, same forest. Note the huge increase in number of trees and lack of open space. For a century we have been suppressing fires. This picture shows why experts say our western public land forests are 15 times denser than they were a hundred years ago.

Now in the year 2000, the cabin was moved. Shortly afterwards, a fire raced through the area. If the cabin had not been moved, it surely would have been destroyed.



The next photo was taken 10 days ago. It shows blackened trees and no tree regeneration. There have been significant problems with erosion.



As you can probably tell, I have a personal passion about the subject of restoring our forests to health. I grew up in Colorado, and most summer weekends my family would head to the mountains. I loved the Rockies, and spent countless hours in the outdoors.

This photo reminds me of the forests I remember as a youngster.
The pines were tall and strong and surrounded by grassy areas.



But over the years, the trees became more dense. Stands like this one became more common. Today's forest are overly dense -- so trees are skinny and unhealthy.



Coloradoans began to notice more prevalent insect infestation and disease in the forests. Whole mountainsides turned from evergreen green to rust as pine needles succumbed, and then to grey as the trees themselves died.

This photo shows an area where huge stands of trees have suffered beetle kill. This is what forests increasingly look like today...dense, diseased and dying. These are tinder boxes just waiting to explode.

